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9 FEB 1965

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Allen-Scott Column on Vietnam - 19 January 1965

1. There follows certain statements which the Allen-Scott column of 19 January 1965 attributed to the testimony of Mr. McCone before the Senate Armed Services Committee on 11 January 1965.

(A) Vietnamese problem is military not political.

"As long as the battle for South Vietnam is treated as a political rather than a military problem, there is little prospect of establishing a stable government in Saigon. That is putting the cart before the horse. The key problem is military and not political and the sooner it is realized and acted on, the better it will be."

Comment: Mr. McCone made no such mention of a military problem. To the contrary, his testimony emphasized the need for political stability (See Tab A).

(B) Opposed policy of withdrawal.

"McCone flatly opposed U.S. withdrawal from South Vietnam when questioned by Senator Strom Thurmond, (R., S.C.), who strongly favors expanding the war to North Vietnam."

Comment: Senator Ellender asked the question, not Senator Thurmond, and Mr. McCone refused to be drawn out on it, saying it was a matter of policy (See Tab B).

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(C) Consequences of pull out.

(1) " 'What would be the effect in Southeast Asia if we should call it a day and get of South Vietnam?' asked Thurmond. McCone replied, 'It would be a major disaster. That is also the opinion of Ambassador Maxwell Taylor.' "

Comment: Mr. McCone made no mention of Ambassador Taylor (See Tab C).

(2) " 'In what way?' continued Thurmond. 'Once our forces were withdrawn,' said McCone, 'South Vietnam would go Communist almost at once. After that, it would only be a short time before the remainder of Southeast Asia would go neutralist and then Communist. India, Thailand, the Philippines, Burma, would all go in quick succession.

'We would be pushed out of the Western Pacific back to Honolulu. That would be the short-term effect. The long-term effect would be even worse.' "

Comment: A colloquy similar to this developed with Senator Pastore, not Senator Thurmond (See Tab C).

2. The tabs contain extracts from the transcript of the briefing before the Senate Armed Services Committee on 11 January 1965.

SIGNED

[Redacted Signature]

Office of Legislative Counsel

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SOUTH VIETNAM IS A POLITICAL PROBLEM

Chairman Russell: Do you think we will ever be able to clean it up unless we get a stable government there?

Mr. McCone: No. I think we have to get a stable government that the people respect, and then I think we have to get the people as a whole, 14 million people, as many as we can, behind that government. I think there is an enormous amount of work, of political action and of propaganda nature to do throughout the country. I don't think that you can successfully fight a war against guerrillas in a country like that unless the people are behind you. If they are behind you, then it is a manageable situation. If they are not behind you, why it is totally unmanageable.

Senator Ellender: Now in respect to your evaluation of Vietnam, you seem to feel that the problem there is one of getting a stable government before we can make progress in winning the war there, am I correct?

Mr. McCone: That is correct.

Senator Ellender: Well, have you, for example, tried to find some ways and means of getting a stable government? Are we going to continue to assist if we don't establish this stable government? Is that your view or will you clarify it?

Mr. McCone: Well, I feel that we have worked continuously at trying to establish a stable government, to encourage the Vietnamese to unite behind a government of their choice. After all, it is their business to do this, and I am gratified over the developments of recent days which indicate that the military and the existing civilian government have reached some kind of an understanding; and I am hopeful that the dissident groups, and there are a lot of them in Vietnam, as you know, the Buddhists on the one hand, and the Catholics on the other, and various political factions, will get behind this agreed arrangement and then we can consider that that problem looks more encouraging.

In answer to Senator Ellender's question concerning any evidence of collusion between the South Vietnamese and the Viet Cong, Mr. McCone stated:

"Well, as I said, Senator, the success of the effort is dependent upon the will of the people to support a government, and to get behind the government. I quote General Eisenhower when I discussed this with him just a few days ago, he said in reading the history of the civil war, when the northern armies would venture into the south, where the people were not behind them, they met with difficulties.

"On the other hand, when the southern armies ventured into the north, people were not behind them and they met with difficulty, and he used this as an example of the necessity of getting the people behind the government and behind the military forces, and he said unless this was done, the effort was futile.

"Therefore, it is hopeful and it is our objective to encourage the establishment of a government which can be supported by the maximum number of people, and then to assist that government in encouraging the support of all of the 14 million people in South Vietnam, and if this is done, then I think you have got a manageable situation there."

In connection with Senator Ellender's statement that we need government stability or should get out of the area, Mr. McCone said:

"Well, this brings up a great many policy problems that are beyond my competence, but it is my opinion these are essentials to success in South Vietnam."

Answering Senator Stennis's question about the chance of getting a dependable government, Mr. McCone said:

"But if we could get a government that could be formed which would have the support of the military and the other groups, political and religious, then I feel there would be a chance to encourage public support of such a government, and a determination to support the government and their military in their fight against the Viet Cong movement.

"Now, that is what I think. Of course, we must persist, discouraging as it seems at times."

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OPPOSING UNITED STATES WITHDRAWAL

Senator Ellender: What would you do if they can't get the people together, would you suggest we pull out?

Mr. McCone: That is a policy question, Senator, which I am not in a position to answer.

Senator Ellender: Well, you have the evidence, you have more evidence than we have, and I thought maybe you would give us your view. That is all, Mr. Chairman.

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CONSEQUENCES OF PULL OUT

Senator Pastore: With your familiarity of the situation in Southeast Asia, what do you think would be the consequences if we did pull out?

Mr. McCone: I think if we pulled out of Vietnam that there would be a serious deterioration in Southeast Asia, and I think it would extend to Cambodia, to Laos, to Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia; and I think the consequences would be most serious.

Senator Thurmond: Is freedom in the free world endangered if all of Southeast Asia goes Communist?

Mr. McCone: I would think so.

Senator Thurmond: If Vietnam is lost to the Communists, will not Southeast Asia be lost to the free world?

Mr. McCone: That is my feeling, Senator.

Senator Thurmond: I agree with you.

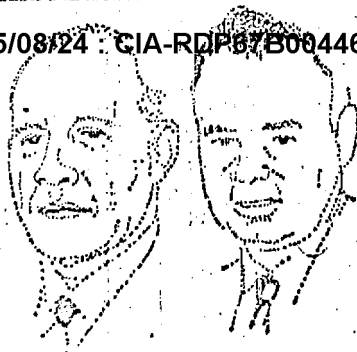
Mr. McCone: You are doing some crystal ball gazing, but I think if we were to lose South Vietnam or to remove our presence from South Vietnam before the conflict is settled, it would mean the acceleration of the communist movement throughout Southeast Asia.

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ALLEN - SCOTT REPORT

Inside Washington

By ROBERT S. ALLEN and PAUL SCOTT



CIA Head Dissents on Viet Nam

WASHINGTON — Central Intelligence Director John McCone is flatly contradicting the Johnson administration's pet thesis regarding the grimly deteriorating situation in South Viet Nam.

The most pressing problem there, McCone holds, is military and not political.

Primary attention and effort should be concentrated on quickly achieving greater combat effectiveness against the increasingly more powerful and successful Communist aggressors. Rather than laboriously trying to bring about a "stable government" among the feuding elements in Saigon.

These blunt views were voiced by the CIA head, due to be replaced soon, in his closed-door testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, which is conducting an extensive study of the ominous South Viet Nam dilemma.

HE DISAGREES

While not directly challenging the administration's "stability first" policy, McCone left no doubt of his emphatic disagreement with it.

"As long as the battle for South Viet Nam is treated as a political rather than a military problem," he told the senators, "there is little prospect of establishing a stable government in Saigon. That is putting the cart before the horse. The key problem is military and not political, and the sooner that is realized and acted on, the better it will be."

Graphically underscoring his contention, McCone presented a detailed report on battle casualties and weapons losses in the past years.

The grim figures revealed mounting South Viet Nam losses in both men and arms. Last year approximately twice as many troops were killed, wounded and missing as in 1962, and nearly three times as many weapons were lost.

In striking contrast, the Viet Cong made gains every year.

Following are publishable highlights of this CIA compilation.

Casualties suffered by South Vietnamese forces in the last three years total 63,500, including 17,100 killed, 36,000 wounded and 10,400 missing in action. South Viet Nam forces in the same period have lost 29,400 weapons.

Viet Cong casualties in 1962-63-64 total 72,700, with 59,000 killed, and 13,700 missing in action. The Reds lost 14,800 weapons.

In 1964 U.S. casualties were 133 killed, 1,022 wounded, 1 missing in action, 3 captured and 1,172 weapons lost.

WITHDRAWAL FATAL

Another foreboding development stressed by the Central Intelligence director is that the Communist aggressors now have better weapons and are operating in large organized units.

Total Red forces in South Viet Nam and enemy-held territory in adjoining Laos and Cambodia are estimated at more than 150,000.

There is also increasing evidence, McCone reported, that North Vietnamese officers and non-coms are now functioning with the Viet Cong, both in training camps and combat. While the Reds use all types of weapons, most of them are Russian-made.

McCone flatly opposed U.S. withdrawal from South Viet Nam when questioned by Sen. Strom Thurmond, R-S.C., who strongly favors expanding the war to North Viet Nam.

"What would be the effect in Southeast Asia if we should call a day and get out of South Viet Nam?" asked Thurmond. "It would be a major disaster," replied McCone. "That is also the opinion of Ambassador Maxwell Taylor."

"In what way?" continued Thurmond.

"Once our forces were withdrawn," said McCone, "South Viet Nam would go Communist almost at once. After that, it would only be a short time before the remainder of Southeast Asia would go neutralist and then Communist. India, Thailand, the Philippines, Burma, would all go in quick succession."

"We would be pushed out of the Western Pacific back to Honolulu. That would be the short-term effect. The long-term effect would be even worse."

In response to questions regarding other areas and developments, McCone told the senators:

"Russia is going to great lengths to perfect a giant missile capable of carrying 50 to 60 megaton (equivalent to 50 to

50 million tons of TNT) nuclear warheads. Also Soviet missile testing has greatly increased since the signing of the nuclear test ban in 1963."

No secret Russian atmospheric nuclear tests have been detected, but the Reds are constantly conducting underground tests.

The CIA is still uncertain who the real new rulers of the Kremlin are. No determination has yet been made of the exact roles of Premier Kosygin and First Communist Party Secretary Brezhnev.

The primary objective of Khrushchev's successors is the same as his — Communist domination of the world. That has not been changed, and there is no likelihood it ever will be.

McCone's successor is still not selected. The only decision so far made by the President is to replace McCone with a "name" rather than a "technician."

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INAUGURAL FLASHES

Harold Stassen, one-time "boy" governor of Minnesota and since then candidate for various other jobs, including president, will be on hand for the Johnson inauguration and related ceremonies. In addition to buying two \$25 tickets for the inaugural ball, Stassen also has purchased two tables for the Minnesota Society's pre-inaugural party in honor of Vice President-elect Hubert Humpfrey... Venezuela's Foreign Minister Borges, in a Caracas broadcast, stated "a visit by President Johnson is in the forefront of our national expectations." Borges gave no indication when such a visit is likely, but was emphatic that "It will mean closer ties between our two countries."

NOTE: The material in the two boxed paragraphs did not appear in the version published in the NORTHERN VIRGINIA SUN for 21 January.